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Schools must use their resources wisely

Before I start requesting more funding from the state, I need the state and all municipalities, including department such as education, to reevaluate their spending patterns and show increased effectiveness and efficiency. How many people in the workforce receive cost of living increases and/or mandatory pay raises? Not many outside of the unionized workforce. Exactly why do we need more money other than for contractual obligations, entitlement programs, and cost of living increases?

I will advocate for a new education funding formula but I can not request more money. The funding formula will bring us closer to unifying our school districts. However, increased funding always seems to fill the needs of our entitlement culture rather than increasing school district performance and increasing student achievement for ALL students. Teachers play a big role in the future success of students. The school effect is HUGE and we should focus on putting the right people in the right place rather than focusing on funding for entitlements.

Rhode Island has some deeply rooted problems such as its business unfriendly climate, the richness of entitlement programs, and the biggest problem, in my

opinion, is the excessive number of state and municipal employees. I believe the state is the largest employer in the state. The continuation of this pattern will eventually lead Rhode Island to bankruptcy. It is very important, in my opinion, that Rhode Island changes the culture from one of entitlement to one of performance.

Regarding Woonsocket's situation, I have formally asked the School Committee, at the June 13 meeting, to open contract negotiations with the teachers union for the purposes of dissolving a salary freeze, a freeze of step increases, and to review and revise the personnel evaluation tools and procedures. We must change our culture from one of entitlement to one of performance. If we cannot afford to retain teachers who are ineffective in leading our students to academic success. We should not endanger our future by using the city plus to balance the education budget risk losing a new middle school.

I will advocate for better education to our children succeed in our future workforce but, I don't believe that a lack of money is preventing us from achieving a better education system. I encourage people to read the Skills

Commission report titled 'Tough Choices or Tough Times.' You may be interested in the law which went into effect January 2007 called the R.I. Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit. This law will allow C-corporations to receive tax credits for contributions that provide private school tuition scholarships to economically disadvantaged children. I can only hope that this law will be implemented effectively and efficiently so it can truly benefit economically disadvantaged children. I don't know how it will be monitored and evaluated. This is something like a 'pseudo' voucher system.

I understand that some may consider my position to be anti-education but in reality it is pro student achievement and therefore pro-education. The work we do is a means to an end situation whereby our end is to graduate a student who is adequately trained and prepared for entry into the global workforce either immediately or after further training through some form of higher education.

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member